

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 10, 2005

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WASHINGTON - The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) will be joined by Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) and Congressman Christopher Smith (R-NJ) for the release of the USCIRF study, *"Thank you, Father Kim Il Sung"; Eyewitness Accounts of Severe Violations of Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion in North Korea,* at an on-the-record press conference on Tuesday, November 15, 2005, in the Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2172, from 3:00-4:00 p.m. The study was conducted by David Hawk, veteran human rights expert and author of the acclaimed study *The Hidden Gulag: Exposing North Korea's Prison Camps.* T

he press conference is

**open to members of the media and the public**

. The release of the study and its recommendations for U.S. policy are especially timely in light of President George W. Bush's November 17 meeting with South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun.

"Thank you, Father Kim Il Sung" is the first phrase North Korean parents are instructed to teach to their children. From cradle to grave, North Korean citizens are surrounded by the all-encompassing presence of the "Juche" ideology and personality cult of the "Great Leader" and his son, the "Dear Leader," Kim Jong Il. Based on interviews with North Korean refugees and defectors, a horrific picture of severe human rights violations is emerging-one that has deep implications for policymakers, the

international community, and human rights defenders.

"The Commission's study - the first of its kind by a U.S. government agency - reports on the forceful suppression of North Korea's once vibrant religious and intellectual life, the establishment of a quasi-religious cult of personality centered on Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il, and the survival of limited religious activity in North Korea," said USCIRF Chair Michael Cromartie. "The former North Koreans offer trenchant testimony, including eyewitness accounts of public executions, on the character of the Kim Jong Il government and the extent to which it controls the thoughts and beliefs of the North Korean people. As the region's powers deal with North Korea's nuclear aspirations, human rights objectives should not be put aside. Our desire is for this study to shed some light on the often perplexing situation in North Korea, offer some insight into the daily lives of ordinary North Koreans, and raise the profile of the human rights situation faced by North Koreans in their country and in China."

What:  
When:  
Where:

Press Conference on North Korea with C  
Tuesday, November 15, 2005, 3:00-4:00 p.  
Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2172

**The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

Michael Cromartie  
- Felice D. Gaer

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